

As a United States citizen living abroad and often in a position to defend the ideals of democracy upon which our country was founded, I was deeply disturbed to find out about Sinclair Broadcasting's recent plans.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

I value the varied opinions that allowed to be expressed within our democratic context. I have seen first hand, here in the former East Germany, what the residual effects of wide-range, one-sided propaganda efforts can be like.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

When the State or, in this case, the Corporation of Sinclair Broadcasting flexes its muscle to forward its own political, ideological, and economic gain instead creating an environment of diverse and democratic opinions in support of the public interest, then they run the risk of creating a social situation not unlike that which was experienced in the Eastern Bloc countries before the "wall came down".

Furthermore, Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.